

172nd Avenue NE Corridor Study

Final Report | Public Open House #1

Thursday April 27, 2006

Introduction

In March the City of Redmond began work on the 172nd Avenue NE Corridor study, which will look at potential improvements to 172nd Avenue NE from NE 111th to NE 124th Street (and in King County from NE 124th to NE 128th Street). This study will evaluate the following:

- Extending 172nd Avenue NE between NE 122nd and NE 124th Street and adding traffic calming devices (Segment C on the map) or, as an alternative, improving NE 122 Street/162nd Place NE from 172nd Avenue NE to NE 124th Street.
- Adding traffic calming devices between NE 111th and NE 122nd Street (Segments A and B on the map).
- Adding traffic calming devices between NE 124th and NE 128th Street (King County) (Segment D on the map)—dependent on the ultimate decision on the roadway extension.

The roadway extension is identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan, as an important connection in the North Redmond area. Currently, traffic speeds along 172nd Avenue are close to 10 MPH or more over the posted speed limit, which meets City criteria for implementing traffic calming measures. In addition, with several development applications along NE 122nd Street and 172nd Avenue NE, it is important that future developments are conditioned effectively. The City Council has requested a study of the area to evaluate the impacts of extending 172nd Avenue NE, explore ways to slow down traffic on the corridor, and identify preferred improvements.

As part of the study, the City is implementing a public process to provide information and to get input on the proposed extension and the traffic calming measures. The public process includes stakeholder interviews, two newsletters and two open houses. This document reports the results of the first open house. The purpose of the first open house was to introduce the 172nd corridor study to area residents and gather input on the proposed roadway extension and traffic calming improvements. The second open house will focus on receiving input on a refined set of alternatives.

Meeting Format

On Thursday April 27, 2006 twenty-six people signed into the 172nd Avenue NE Corridor Study Public Open House. The meeting was held from 5:00 – 7:30 at the Horace Mann Elementary School. A newsletter announcing the project and open house was distributed to more than 400 residents living in the project vicinity.

Attendees were greeted by project staff and were given a comment form and information on the project. They were asked to identify their home with a push pin on a map of the area. A 45 minute presentation was given at 5:45 and attendees were given an opportunity to ask questions between the project overview/extension and the traffic calming presentations. Chris Hoffman from Norton-Arnold & Company welcomed residents and introduced Rosemarie Ives, the Mayor of Redmond. Mayor Ives discussed the importance of the project and the value of public input. City of Redmond Project Engineer, Jeanne Justice, then presented an overview of the project. Following Jeanne's presentation attendees had an opportunity to ask questions about the project. To view these questions please see Attachment A. Following the first Question & Answer period, Jeff Palmer, the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Coordinator, presented information about traffic calming between NE 111th and NE 122nd Street and NE 124th and NE 128th Street. A Question & Answer period followed Jeff's presentation. These questions can also be located in Attachment A.

Comment Highlights

Five attendees completed forms at the open house and seven residents emailed comments to project staff. There were a range of comments about the project, which addressed issues from traffic calming and the extension of 172nd Avenue NE to the public open house and utilities along the roadway. The majority of the residents felt that traffic calming devices will create a safer environment and will help control speed along the corridor and streets connecting to the corridor. Many citizens liked the idea of roundabouts and a multi-modal corridor.

In addition to traffic calming, residents addressed the 172nd Avenue NE extension. While some residents felt that extending 172nd Avenue NE would reduce the traffic burden on other arterials and that many local residents would use this connection, others did not like the idea of extending the corridor. These residents felt that traffic would increase along 172nd Avenue NE and that drivers would speed on the corridor. Additionally, several residents felt that the negative impacts on the neighborhood would outweigh the benefits of the extension.

Attachment A

Questions & Answers

Project Overview/Extension

- Q: What level of detail is available regarding plans for the roadway? For example, is there information on speed limits and whether there are plans for a multi-modal road?
- Q: Os the speed limit on 116th Avenue NE 25 mph?
- Q: Is there a plan to reduce the speed limit on 116th Avenue NE?
- Q: If the budget is large enough to make 116th multi-modal, will the speed limit be different?
- Q: What will keep 172nd from becoming an arterial? Will traffic be funneled?

Traffic Calming

- Q: What is a 22 foot traffic table?
- Q: How do pedestrians use a round-about?
- Q: What is the speed around a round-about? What are the right-of-way rules?
- Q: What is the height/size of the speed bumps on 111th Avenue NE?
- Q: Will the section on 172nd Avenue NE (between 111th and 116th) be treated the same with regards to traffic calming?
- Q: When the project is finished, is there assurance that traffic calming devices will be built on the segment through 124th(Outside City limits)?
- Q: What are the city limits?

Attachment B

Written Comments—comment form and email

Traffic Calming

- I think that cutting 172nd through to 124th will create a **huge** increase in speeding traffic. The best traffic calming device you have is the break in 172nd.
- Appreciate staff efforts.
- Yes! Make it functional and attractive. The ratio of cement/planting mix/plants in the new traffic calming done along 111th is too unbalanced. The planting area needs to be bigger if the plants are to grow. The signs and all of the “turtle bumps” look like overkill.
- In my opinion the best traffic calming design is narrowing the street as much as possible. Other effective devices are: speed bumps (as many as possible) and a fixed site radar.
- Speed controls along 111th were important. I would like to see something similar done along 172nd, but “meatier” in some way. The planters are rather small and not able to hold any plants of substantial size. Then, the “island signs” take away from the garden look of the island, and make it look like a sign in a parking lot. I like the speed bumps!

Intersection of 116th and 172nd

- I strongly favor the traffic circle at 116th and 172nd. A traffic light would increase congestion, noise, accidents and speed. The slowing effect of the circle would help reduce noise from rapid acceleration from people turning onto 116th and trying to merge into heavy/high speed traffic during peak hours. A traffic circle is more efficient than a light with high volumes of traffic.
- I’m now very much in favor of the roundabout (previously I was a bit against it). There are a couple of reasons I changed my mind:
- I think a large roundabout at that intersection would do a better job slowing traffic through the intersection. A couple of nights ago I was standing on my back porch and I saw a car fly through the intersection way above the speed limit on 116th. It occurred to me that a traffic light won’t do anything to solve that problem, and might even aggravate it (people accelerating to “make” the green light).
- Visually, if we want that intersection to be a gateway/center of the neighborhood, I think there are some opportunities that the roundabout presents that are more attractive than an intersection. I’m not sure what the options for the central area are—I assume any landscaping needs to be low to allow sight-paths through the roundabout—but I think something nice could be done within those constraints.

- Setting the crosswalks back from the roundabout and providing a center island gives me more confidence that pedestrians can cross safely. I'm still a little worried, but I think it's still a better solution than the signaled intersection (where I would be most concerned about people making quick turns from 116th onto 172nd and hitting pedestrians in the crosswalk).
- The existing sight distances at the intersection (especially at the Northwest corner) are dangerous. A roundabout would open up the intersection and alleviate that problem (at the expense of acquiring the land along the corner).

Traffic calming on 172nd between 111th and 116th

- I **really** like the incorporation of a traffic circle at the entrances to Grayson (at NE 115th Way and potentially at NE 112th Way). I think those two additions greatly improve the local-road feel. A nice side effect may be to reduce speeding into/out of the entrances to Grayson (the owners of the house that sits at the Northeast corner of Grayson (wedged between 116th, 172nd, and 115th) have small children and have complained that people in our neighborhood turn into 115th way too fast before slowing down).
- I slightly prefer alternative 1 for Segment A. I think that a speed hump in the center of 172nd may have a greater impact on traffic speeds than the center median would, and I like the fact that this option includes a traffic circle at the NE 112th way (southern) entrance to Grayson. The other concern I have about the median is that most of the Eastern side of the street is undeveloped and there are some driveways that lead directly onto 172nd, so you need to design the median to allow entrance/egress to a changing situation. On the other hand, I think the continuous median may be a more attractive solution (depending on how it's planted and how wide it is- what could you plant in the median- could small trees be allowed, or is it just low scrub?). I also really hate the idea of a fixed radar site (our houses are elevated such that the radar sign is going to be visible from people's back porches).
- Be sure to leave room for bicycle lanes on each side of the road. That's why I'm not a fan of bump-outs at the curbs.
- The Southernmost crosswalk connects the Puget Power trail across 172nd. Would this be raised? Note that the school bus currently picks up/drops off kids just north of 112th, so kids will be crossing there and not along the power trail. On the other hand, we would prefer if the bus would pickup/dropoff further north (closer to 115th Way), which they won't do currently since there's no sidewalk and the school transportation dept. deemed the intersection at 116th too close and worried about accidents; maybe the improvements to the intersection will change their mind. On the third hand, we've been notified that once sidewalks are completed

from 172nd down to Einstein, they'll cut off elementary school bus service, so we'll only need to worry about high school service.

Traffic calming on 172nd North of 116th

- Not too much opinion here, since I imagine you have lots of feedback from other people in this neighborhood. Again, I like the incorporation of traffic circles (e.g. at the intersection of 116th & 122nd) and I think this would help discourage cut through traffic if used with other traffic calming mechanisms. I still worry about cut through if 172nd is extended to the north.

Extension of 172nd Avenue NE

- Don't do it! All of north English Hill will come flying through. There is very little benefit for North Redmond neighbors.
- Don't do it. Homes already there were not built to take this traffic—a new “Avondale Speedway” is not needed along 172nd. It will ruin that whole corridor, traffic calming or not. Use roads already in place. King County does not have the money to develop.
- We DO NOT support Extending 172nd Ave NE between NE 122nd and NE 124th St. This major extension will turn this neighborhood into another traffic congestion area and further deteriorate peacefulness of the area. Other improvements listed there on Segment A, B & D are fine.
- What if the provisions for discouraging drivers from using the proposed corridor as a shortcut don't work? What will constitute “too much” new traffic and what is the plan for collecting the traffic data? What is the contingency plan if the traffic levels are substantially higher than expected and at a level that is unsafe?
- The plan is expected to result in increased traffic flow through multiple residential school zones (primarily on 166th Avenue NE) and through intersections which are already quite congested at peak hours. When congestion and delays are increased, drivers often sacrifice good driving behavior for expediency. Thus, a data driven analysis with pre-determined responses based on the outcome should be facilitated. I have heard a wide range of guesstimates for what will happen once we create this new corridor. If the modeling is incorrect, a mitigation plan should already be completed.
- I would like to express my opposition to the proposal to open 172nd from 122nd to 124th. To be honest with you I would probably benefit from having 172nd open directly into Redmond. I would have more driving options and on some days shorter commutes. However I believe the negative impact to the surrounding neighborhoods is going too far out weigh any personal benefit. In addition, I believe that there is a high likelihood that if 172nd is opened up south of 128th more traffic is going to flow north of 128th into the English Hill neighborhood.

People are going to be looking for a way through to Woodinville. The effect will be that we get more traffic traveling faster into our neighborhood which is obviously a negative for our neighborhood. As I am sure you are aware 172nd is heavily used by the people of neighborhood for walking, running and bicycle riding. It is also heavily traveled by our kids on their way to and from Sunrise Elementary which is located on 172nd. Also I am sure you are aware we are already struggling with traffic issues through our neighborhood and as you can imagine the change that Redmond is proposing will only amplify those problems. In closing, I truly believe opening 172nd is the wrong thing to do for English Hill and our sister neighborhoods and has the potential to fundamentally change the character of our neighborhoods. There are alternatives to opening 172nd that would affect far fewer people. Redmond should be pursuing other less disruptive alternatives.

- Improving 122 St and not opening up 172nd to vehicular traffic is a viable alternative for the city seeing as though much of the new development will be along this street. I oppose the extension of 172nd due to the following issues:
 - Safety is a primary issue. Residents will speed through the connection to get to/from the 520 highway during commuting hours. This type of throughway traffic is not what Redmond is aiming for when the discussion of “Connectivity” is put forth. New “traffic calming” features will not deter commuters as they race through Redmond either down 116th to Avondale or south and west to the SR 202 corridor.
 - Improving 122nd and not opening up all of 172nd, would increase the success of the traffic calming features. The city acknowledges traffic calming measures that fit in the neighborhood character are necessary on 172nd Street.
 - Another issue is neighborhood character. Extending 172nd will change the neighborhood feel, both north and south of the development. The tall trees now blocking the view of the developments are a calming feature. People headed out of English and Education Hills view these trees as they leave. They are important in an aesthetic sense and also give both neighborhoods an identity.
 - The need for vehicular connectivity is questionable. The City wants to appeal to other forms of transportation. Why do we need to make it easy to get in the car and drive half a mile? This is a waste of resources, causes pollution and is unhealthy! I believe connectivity can be accomplished by creating a pedestrian/bikeway, which could be wide enough for emergency vehicles. I would use the bike/pedestrian path to take my family to the new shops at Avondale/116th or further to connect with other bike paths.
 - Creating a natural pathway, using the existing trees, and NOT leveling out the slight grade, would be a great asset to the City of Redmond. Keep the natural features and large trees. Redmond does not want to become another crowded “cookie cutter” city! Save the features that make it unique, even if it does mean the connection is a trail/bike emergency vehicle corridor instead of another crowded urban parkway, with its new

street trees side walks and curbs. Another speedway through the city would be detrimental.

- If protecting neighborhood character is a serious objective of the planning process, the 172nd Avenue NE should not be pushed through at the 124th Street. The 172nd Avenue NE should only be developed as needed for the Glenshire I project. As protection for all neighborhood's character, I am for the presented alternative of improving 122nd Street, 162nd Place NE from 172nd Avenue NE to 124th Street.
- If the "push through" of the 172nd Avenue NE is inevitable, it is of critical importance that the traffic calming devices of segment D are agreed upon (financial funding and alternative choice) before the push-through is done!
- Definitely think it is needed.
- Extension is a good idea. We are all aware of the heavy traffic load on 124th and this will continue to grow. If the city had redesigned the intersection of 124th and Redmond-Woodinville highway properly maybe this would not have to be. This intersection does not flow; it was failing before redesign and continues to fail. What a waste of money and resources. I won't get into this, what was done is done. I work in civil engineering and the redesign of that intersection was poorly thought out and does not take in future growth. So, that said, I see no reasonable alternatives to improve traffic flows on 124th. Many on this hill say the problem will be traffic coming from 122nd. This is wrong; the traffic problems are not coming from in town growth as much as from the outlying areas and this growth will continue. Yes, the infill of houses puts a burden on our roads but most of this is coming from areas of growth beyond the 122nd and 172nd neighborhoods. I have three reasons 172nd needs to be opened.
 - To relieve the traffic burden on 124th and Redmond-Woodinville intersection now and in the future. Many of these people are headed to Redmond and the left turn pocket to Redmond is too short not to mention the lack of a turning lane for Woodinville.
 - A safety issue with 164th and 122nd Street. This intersection is a real hazard to drivers trying to cross 124th from 164th to 122nd; they are putting the lives in danger. This intersection needs a signal before someone gets killed. I have seen people headed for Redmond driving down 124th in the oncoming lane to turn left on 122nd and near misses with cars coming from 164th. This intersection has a water problem. Water is seeping and running across the intersection and becomes very slippery in cold weather this has been an issue for years. The problems are compounded with it's location on a hill and curve. By opening up 172nd those who make that left onto 122nd Street will be making a much safer left turn on a safe control intersection.
 - A cost issue. The barricade at the end of 172nd is there for a reason. When the development was first built the intent was for the future extension of this road those who bought houses there bought knowing full

well this could come to pass. The cost to the extension of this road far out weighs the cost of redesigning, straightening, regarding, the west part 122nd, which had been mentioned, or so I have heard. The intersection of 172nd and 124th is already established. The visibility and grades are good for this kind of improvement.

- I ask you what are the cons? Yes the folks who live along the south side of 172nd are going to be greatly impacted. And yes we might get higher traffic speed on 172nd, frankly we have that already. Traffic calming improvements can be added. I see no real reason why this improvement should not be done. I for on would use it and so would the people who live there. Growth is going to happen and continue. We can not stop it we can only try and manage it; this is your job. Even if you choose not to open this street at this time, I believe we will be right back here in the future as the growth continues. I also think it comes down to a safety issue. Something really needs to be done about the 122nd and 124th intersection, this is not a safe intersection. So I strongly encourage you to think hard and plan ahead and count the cars headed to Redmond. Add in the future growth and then do the math.
- I love the idea of making 172nd Ave NE a multi-use road, and putting a corner commercial area there with a coffee shop and other small businesses, with lower-priced housing and apartments above.

Other Comments

- It is increasingly dangerous to make a left turn at 172nd PI NE and NE 116th Street. There was not much visibility at this intersection before construction and construction has made it considerably more dangerous. There is heavy traffic driving west from Avondale that makes a left turn onto 172nd and traffic traveling south from the other side of 116th. There should be a traffic light at the intersection before someone is injured.
- So far, I'm totally supportive of all that the City of Redmond and the North Redmond community committees have proposed. I hope there are many others such as myself out there—residents of developments—who feel the same way. I would love to see Redmond develop into a more progressive, unique, and interesting city, and many of the plans for this area seem to be going in that direction.
- There are many others I have also heard who worry that some of these plans, such as the corner commercial area on NE 116th St/172nd Ave NE, will bring down their housing values. I know the entire Grayson development has signed a petition against this proposal. I think this is so small-minded of them and extremely greedy. The home prices in this corridor are already so preposterously expensive, and I highly doubt that a little retail corner across from them would bring down their home values by any significant amount. It would be so great to have a real neighborhood corner that we could all walk to, get a cup of coffee and a paper, drop off some dry cleaning, etc., and have a chance to meet neighbors from all over the corridor who also walked over. The whole idea is to get people out of their cars and their houses and have real face-to-face interactions!
- Is parking going to be allowed along 172nd by Cam West/Burnstead development? I hope not. Reduce the speed on 116th—people do NOT go 35 mph. Add bike lanes along 172nd! Make it **very** pedestrian friendly. How do pedestrians get across a round-about? Make substantial medians with attractive trees.
- I think a light at 162nd and 124th will be appropriate; with the improvements along with 122nd.
- I'd like to see more inter-neighborhood connectivity explicitly planned now, rather than relying on 172nd to carry the entire burden. We should have more connections between 116th and 122nd (e.g. through Northstar), between 128th and 116th (somewhere between 172nd and Avondale), and between 116th and 111th.
- Anything you guys can do to improve traffic on Avondale to the south and at the intersection of 124th and Red-Wood Road will have a major impact on reducing cut through traffic on 172nd.
- I also support the addition of a new fire station to our neighborhood. I have heard that the land designated for this (where the moldy old "Coming Soon – Redmond

Fire Station” sign now stands) has been there for many years now, and I don’t know all the reasons why it has not been built. But I do think a new fire station closer to the North Redmond community is extremely vital and of utmost importance.

- I also support the church on the corner of Red-Wood Road and NE 124th St in developing their land and making it into a major commercial area (as long as Thenos Dairy and Vivian’s Pride Ice Cream may remain!).
- There are those who oppose these plans because they want this part of Redmond to stay “rural,” which I find to be ridiculous, because Redmond hasn’t been truly “rural” in years. The diversity of the Redmond community has given the city a much more cosmopolitan feel, and I support any plans to make Redmond a leader in how its neighborhoods evolve and grow.
- I would also like to add that a neighborhood park on NE 116th Street would be fantastic. The closest city park to us is Meadows Park, which is quite a bit of a walk. With so many new developments on the 116th corridor, it would make sense to have a medium-sized park with a playground for the residents to be able to walk to.
- I have experience in traffic safety, traffic planning, law enforcement and data analysis and am interested in volunteering for the project.
- I am primarily interested in assuring that public safety is the primary driver in analyzing the impact. Commuter convenience and traffic re-direction to the downtown area for commercial benefit are secondary and tertiary drivers.
- I was really impressed with the quality and professionalism of the open house yesterday. You guys really did a great job.
- It was a great presentation last Thursday. Logical, clear, no-nonsense and all possibilities covered. Well done!

Attachment C

Written Comments—design plans

Extension of 172nd Avenue NE between NE 122nd and NE 124th

Alternative 1

Segment A

- Add driveway on right side of the road.
- Concerned about safety of high school drivers regarding traffic circle on hill.
- Include transit stop on the left side of road.
- Light raised crosswalk and make as a table.
- No roundabout.
- Traffic circle to slow traffic down from hill.

Segment B

- Landscape traffic circle.
- Like speed cushion on right side of road.

Segment C

- City access to city park needs to be accommodated on right side of the road.
- Don't do this segment. Keep it as a pathway/bikeway.

Segment D

- How will we get out of our neighborhood streets and driveways if 172nd is extended?
- This is out of character with the neighborhood.
- Traffic sits at entrance during p.m. peak?

Alternative 2

Segment A

- Add driveway on right side of the road.
- Construct only as needed for Glenshire 1.
- Definitely prefer roundabout.
- Flashing sign likely to be unpopular with my neighbor (re: Fixed Site Radar [Opt.]) on left side of road.
- Get rid of traffic circles.
- Investigate traffic circle option.
- Light please (as soon as you can).
- Like roundabout and circles.
- Like speed cushions.
- Like center raised medians.
- Like light.
- No light, prefer roundabout to keep tone of neighborhood.
- Paint crosswalks at NE 115th Street and NE 112th Street. Like bulb-outs and tables, center median with plantings! Creating a canopy calms traffic.
- Prefer this alternative.
- Recommend 4-way stop control at intersection of 172nd NE and NE 11th.
School bus-stop here.

Segment B

- Add parking on right side of road because nearby cul-de-sack needs it.
- Construct only as needed for Glenshire 1.
- Like full median.
- Like the raised center median and meandering sidewalks. Keep separation because it calms the roadway and feels rural.
- Prefer this alternative.

Segment C

- Construct only as needed for Glenshire 1.
- Extension if implemented will be a commuter corridor so you must plan for it.
- Please look at the 122nd/162nd improvements only!
- Prefer this alternative.

Segment D

- Install bulb-outs and tables as well as planted medians.
- Like narrowing ground.
- Only if extension is absolutely inevitable.
- Prefer this alternative.

Alternative 3 Segment D

- This was "only striping". This is acceptable only if extension does not occur.

122nd Street/162nd Avenue NE

Alternative 1

- Hammerhead or cul-de-sac on left side of road; right in/right out only driveway.

Alternative 2

- Not practical.

Alternative 3

- How does this mesh with county's plans of improvements to NE 124th/128th corridor?
- Like this design! Prefer this to 172nd extension.
- Prefer 172nd extension.

General

- Improvement to ease windiness needed.
- Like the raised center median, meandering sidewalks. Don't like shift off 172nd as arterial. Develop a tree canopy over roadway to add in calming.
- May have special challenges for transit, especially at NE 124th with right in/right out driveway.
- The 128th/162nd intersection is a bad choice for a corridor. 128th is a steep hill and so is 162nd. It is less direct.
- This seems to be already "traffic calming"; curves up the hill and around to discourage traffic through this development.
- Trail connections?